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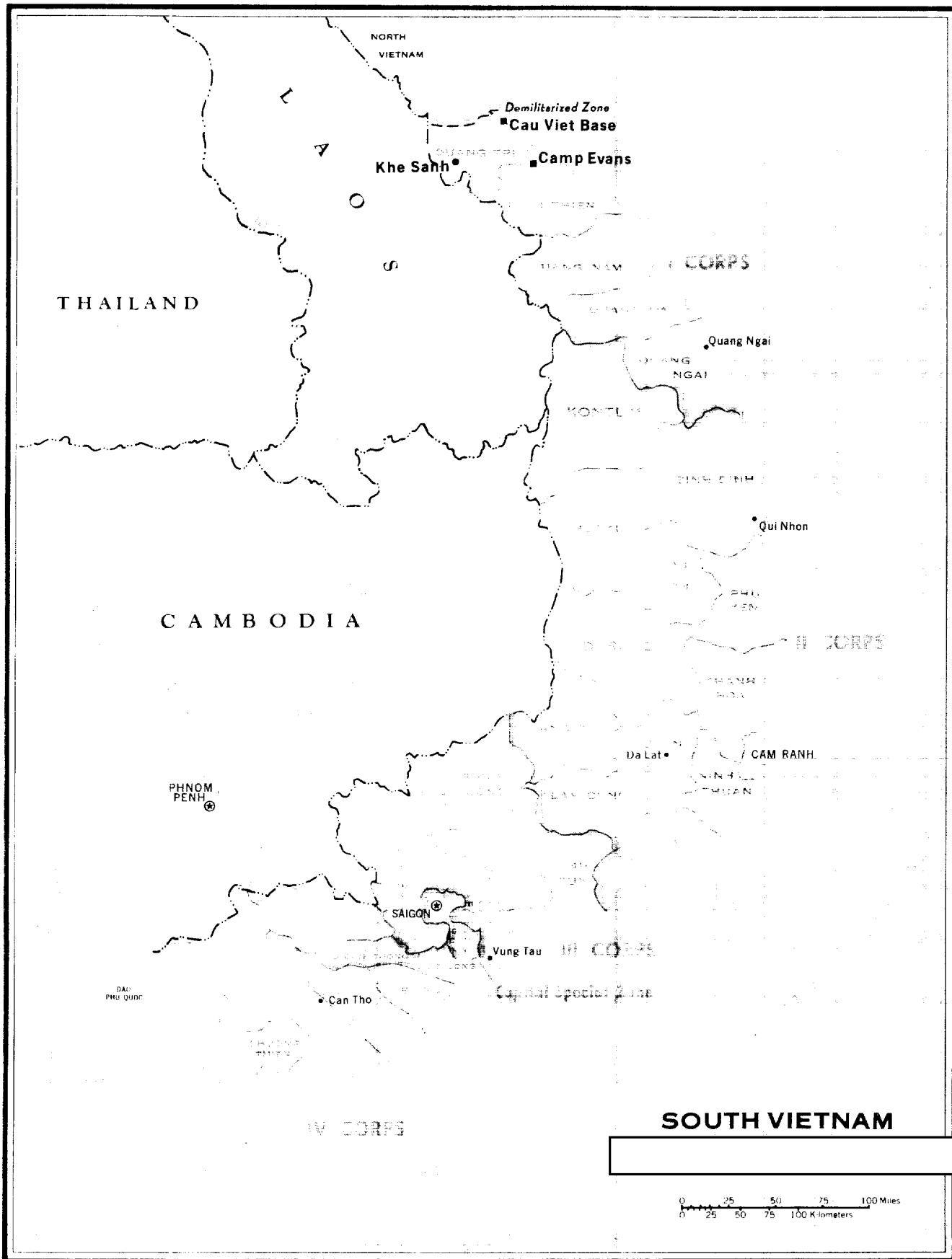
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South Vietnam: The generally low level of military activity of recent weeks was interrupted during the past two days by several significant clashes.

In northern I Corps, US Marines fought a six-hour battle with an entrenched Communist force north of Khe Sanh and a day-long battle near Camp Evans, while Communist troops shelled the important naval base at Cau Viet with rocket and artillery fire. Allied operations in the delta south of Saigon resulted in sharp engagements in Chuong Thien and Dinh Tuong provinces in which nearly 100 Viet Cong were killed.

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[USSR-Czechoslovakia: The talks in Cierna continued last night and, according to news reports, last-minute hitches in drafting a joint communiqué have developed.

The Czechoslovak news service reported that Brezhnev returned to the negotiating table yesterday afternoon. Earlier Western press reports had said that he had taken ill in the morning. Whatever the nature of his indisposition, it evidently was not serious.

The announcement on Austrian radio of Mrs. Dubcek's trip to Yugoslavia will bring fear and confusion to most Czechoslovaks, who will probably conclude that the talks have been going badly. Mrs. Dubcek's motives for leaving Czechoslovakia are not yet known, but if she has not left for safety's sake or on a thoughtless whim, she could conceivably be carrying a personal message from her husband to Yugoslav President Tito.

Czechoslovak reporting on the talks has been guardedly optimistic. Prague Radio reported yesterday that Dubcek carried on an "optimistic discussion" with residents of Cierna during the noon recess. Earlier in the day, Rude Pravo quoted presidium member Smrkovsky as saying the negotiations were taking a "promising course."

On 30 July the US Army attaché in Prague reported seeing a fully equipped Soviet force of nearly division strength traveling southwest in central Czechoslovakia. On the previous day, he had seen another convoy consisting of 3,000 to 3,500 vehicles about 25 miles away. It is not yet clear whether these forces were moving from an area within Czechoslovakia or whether they had come into the country from southern Poland.]

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US military attachés in Hungary reported yesterday that three fully equipped Soviet divisions had assembled in an area near the Czechoslovak border.

East German and Polish reservists have been called up to take part in the Warsaw Pact rear services exercises, according to a Moscow Radio announcement yesterday. Soviet reservists allegedly were called up at the beginning of the exercise last week.

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North Korea - Nepal: Pyongyang's effort to establish closer ties with Nepal through the visit of a North Korean "goodwill" delegation to Kathmandu has thus far been a failure.

The head of the delegation reportedly irritated Nepalese officials after his arrival on 26 July by insisting that the unofficial delegation be treated as an official one. When his requests for Nepalese agreement to establish diplomatic relations with Pyongyang and for an audience with the King were rejected, he refused to keep any further appointments.

25X1 [redacted] although Kathmandu had previously been willing to consider establishing trade relations, the performance of the North Korean delegation is likely to cool Nepal's interest. [redacted]

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Nigeria: French support for secessionist Biafra may jeopardize scheduled peace talks and prolong the civil war.

A French Government announcement on 31 July stops short of recognition of Biafra but does say that "appropriate international procedures" should be taken to settle the conflict on the basis of Biafra's right to self-determination. The French have heretofore taken a neutral stance publicly,

[REDACTED]

The Biafrans now will be encouraged to maintain a hard stance at the upcoming peace talks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[REDACTED]

The Addis talks may well not get off the ground if the Biafrans remain as adamant as in the past.

With federal civilian and military hard liners already pressing for an all-out offensive, the French action could well persuade Gowon to give the order to do so, particularly if he believes the French will follow up their moral commitment to Biafra with military hardware or cash. Some French aid cannot be ruled out, although it is unlikely to be given openly or in any large quantities. The Biafrans, however, would not need a great deal to be able to continue their stubborn resistance.

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Congo (Brazzaville): Political turmoil in Brazzaville has apparently moved to the streets and could lead to the ouster of President Massamba-Debat.

Armed troops of the radical-controlled militia reportedly arrested the commander of the regular army and began patrolling Brazzaville's streets on the morning of 31 July. The local radio claims that mass demonstrations in support of the President also are taking place.

These developments follow Massamba-Debat's move last week to discredit the opposition. The radicals, who are probably responsive to deposed Premier Noumazalay, may have felt compelled to move quickly or face the possibility of being eliminated completely by the wily chief of state from positions of power in the government and the ruling single party.

Massamba-Debat remains in control of the Congo's radio, which has issued a stream of denunciations of the radical-leftists and has called upon the public to rally to the regime or face possible widespread violence. Radiobroadcasts have also reported a statement of support for the President from the army.

The army, however, has suffered from incessant attacks from the left and may be ineffectual. Other regular security forces, the gendarmerie and sureté which are probably loyal to the President, could prove to be the decisive elements if the army and the militia clash.

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India: Food production for the crop year just ended reached a record high, although substantial imports will still be required.

New Delhi's official estimate of grain and pulse production during the crop year that ended 30 June totals 95.6 million tons. This exceeds last year's drought-depressed production by 20.6 million tons, an increase of over 27 percent--and is 6.6 million tons higher than the previous record harvest of 1964-65. The official estimate is probably on the conservative side because of political pressure from some states to retain more of their production.

Even this record harvest may not be enough to restore per capita consumption to the inadequate levels of the early 1960s. At least 12 million tons will go for seed, animal feed, and waste. Another three to four million tons will be needed to rebuild depleted private stocks as a hedge against an unfavorable monsoon this year. Government procurement to build up emergency buffer stocks will also remove a substantial amount from the market. The presently projected import requirements of 7.5 million tons, even should they be fulfilled, may not fill the gap.

Good weather, coupled with stepped-up agricultural development efforts, accounts for the substantial increase in India's food production. The monsoon, which has just arrived over the subcontinent, must again be favorable if the momentum is to be maintained.

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Ecuador: The pro-Soviet Communist Party reportedly will add violence to its strategy when its national congress opens today in Guayaquil.

The Communist movement has been factionalized and ineffective in the past. Probably in hopes of attracting some young adherents, the orthodox party deviated from its past line of peaceful opposition early this year by making plans for a military training and operations program with emphasis on urban activities.

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Officials in Guayaquil are bracing for trouble, which they expect will be caused by pro-Cuba and pro-Peking elements trying to discredit the Moscow-liners, rather than by the delegates to the congress.

The most influential of several foreign guests at the congress will be Chilean Senator Luis Corvalan, secretary general of the Communist party that is the outstanding South American exponent of the nonviolent line. Even his influence, however, may not prevent adoption of a tactic suited both to the Ecuadorian scene and to the problem of competing with more reckless leftist forces.

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[Mexico]: Relative calm has been restored in Mexico City following talks between students and the authorities, but the ready issues of police brutality and university autonomy still provide the radicals ample opportunity for exploitation. The rector of the National University of Mexico is scheduled to lead a march outside the university grounds this afternoon to protest violation of the institution's autonomy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Press reports indicate student uprisings in two provincial capitals. The more serious was in Villahermosa, Tabasco, where two students are reported dead following federal troop intervention.

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